Isabel Johnson

Go Fix It

Plastic bottle life vests utilize the floating properties of plastic bottles to keep a person afloat. This same notion could be used for other water floating structures.

Safety comes first is a phrase often used in the U.S. which has been integrated into the workplace and at home. There are areas of the world where safety cannot come first because of expense. One safety item that is expensive is life jackets. Developing countries struggle with providing life jackets to people who are unable to swim or need to be rescued. A possible solution to this problem is life jackets made of floating trash items.

Having grown up on a lake, there is plenty of trash thrown into the lake. Much of it sinks making it invisible to boaters, but the rest will float on the surface. Much of the floating liter is plastic bottles and aluminum cans. In developing areas, trash like this accumulates more because of inefficient trash collection programs. Having garbage in water, especially fresh water, can

cause environmental problems for the immediate area but also a health concern for people that drink the water. To limit the harmful effects of trash in water resources, people can collect the floating trash and use it to fill life jackets.

Using trash to creating floating resources has been seen around the world. Richart Sowa lives on a plastic bottle floating island off the coast of Mexico. Richart used 250,000 bottles to create a base for his island which holds a two story house. Initially meant to cool the island, Richart grew mangroves and overtime have weaved into the bottle structure creating a strong support for the bottles. Richart believes he has motivated others implement his resourcefulness and develop their own sustainable creations.

It is evident that there are large amounts of trash which can be repurposed. For trash filled life jackets, a person can wear a vest with pockets placed around the chest and neck. Empty plastic bottles are stuffed into the pockets giving a person lift and allowing them to stay afloat. This idea could extend from a life jacket to a buoys, docks, and other water regulatory structures.

Works Cited

Mistry, Janak. "Float-on : A Low Cost Life Jacket Made of PET Bottles." *Inhabitat Spring Greening Competition Floaton A Low Cost Life Jacket Made of PET Bottles Comments*. Inhabitat, 20 May 2010. Web. 20 Nov. 2014.

Roberts, Gareth, and Michael Carrroll. "Meet British 'Robinson Crusoe' Who Lives with Supermodel on Island He Made out of 150,000 Recycled Bottles." *Mirror*. N.p., 07 Nov. 2014. Web. 20 Nov. 2014.